IDEALISM VERSUS REALITY: GALDÓS'S CRITIQUE OF PLATONISM IN *FORTUNATA Y JACINTA*

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IN chapter five (book one) of *Fortunata y Jacinta* Galdós has Juanito Santa Cruz recall that one of the participants in his premarital merrymaking was Fortunata's uncle, "a quien llaman *Platón* porque comía en un plato como un barreño."[1] Neither the behavior of *Platón* at the recalled party nor the explanation for the nickname inclines the reader to presume a serious identification of the character with the Greek philosopher Plato, and it is for this reason that critics have been continually puzzled and have sought unsuccessfully to explain Galdós's use of the name. Walter Pattison, for example, states: "Curiously he [Galdós] gave the nickname 'Platón' to a character of *Fortunata y Jacinta*. . . . The Spanish personage has none of the spiritual grace of [Plato] Karataev [in *War and Peace*], but it seems that the name 'Platón' stuck in Don Benito's memory from his reading of Tolstoy."[2] Pedro Ortiz Armengol, on the other hand, says: "Algo forzada y vulgar nos parece la explicación del apodo, según Galdós, *quien podría habérselo ahorrado sin que el texto perdiera nada,* pero el mote de «Platón» a un maleante está ahí y creemos que no es sino un eco más de la hermandad de esta novela con *El Doctor Centeno,* donde un personaje es apodado, afectuosamente esta vez, «Aristóteles»," p. 43 [italics added].

It is my belief, however, that the text would lose much if the nickname were omitted and that Galdós did indeed intend a reference to the famous Greek philosopher, for when *Platón* reappears in chapter nine of book one as the person who will sell the false "Pituso" to Jacinta, definite, albeit humorous connections with Plato and his philosophic concepts begin to be apparent, and as the novel proceeds, it becomes clear that Galdós intends to offer the reader a critique of contemporary ideas, developed on two levels, which will ultimately affirm the validity of his own realistic-naturalistic point of view. The first level works through the text to show the consequences of Platonic idealism for the lives of the characters and moves from the humorous to the tragic; the second consists in a more or less formal "curso de filosofía" by spokesmen—some humorous, some entirely serious—of the several competing schools of thought.

On the first level, the course begins with our introduction to the (apparently) ridiculously named *Platón,* a character who is in every respect the opposite of his historical counterpart, yet who serves as a distorting mirror to the ideas the venerable Greek expressed. Such a procedure was consonant with Galdós's technique in several other novels—and in *Fortunata y Jacinta* itself—of having certain characters (such as "Rossini" Estupiñá and Napoleon-like Mauricia la *Dura*) humorously reflect aspects of famous personages, while entertaining the reader by means of the great ironical distance between the thus individualized character and the historical prototype. Bound by the aesthetics of realism to provide an accurate account of the historical events that form the background of the novel, Galdós would have seen the opportunity for a rich play of ideas in counterpointing the First Spanish Republic with the Platonic model by means of a caricature of Plato himself. It is with respect to *Platón*'s observations concerning the First Spanish Republic, whose brief existence in the years 1873-74 serves as backdrop to the chapter, that Galdós begins subtly to evoke the political concepts of the *Dialogues.*

For Plato, the republic was the ideal form of government (and his most important dialogue is entitled the *Republic*); for *Platón*—stupid, insensitive, and uneducated—the Republic is the source of all his difficulties and the object of much verbal abuse. He believes that this "repóblica puerca, repóblica cochina" (p. 112), which he claims to have helped bring about through revolutionary activities, owes him employment; however, all important administrative officials have refused to give him a position, so that, at fifty years of

age, he is in every sense a complete vocational failure. He sees himself as having been betrayed by the Republic, and while the level of his political "discourse" never rises above a self-centered whine, the Primera República in fact fell far short of Plato's ideal and would have been seen as a betrayal by far more objective observers than the dismal *Platón*.[3]

The commentary on Platonism extends beyond the mere concept of a republic here, however, for Plato asserted that each person has but one occupation for which he is best suited and that in the ideal state (republic) he must be allowed to have only that occupation.[4] Moreover, as one commentator has paraphrased Plato further, "people do not . . . *choose* the trade they wish to practice, rather, they are *given* the job for which they are best suited . . . and a man will be happy only if he performs . . . the job for which he is best suited."[5] Thus Galdós has Guillermina Pacheco address herself to *Platón*'s vocational problem:

«El consejo allá va. Tú no vales absolutamente para nada. No sabes ningún oficio, ni siquiera el de peón, porque eres haragán y no te gusta cargar pesos. No sirves ni para barrendero de las calles, ni siquiera para llevar un cartel con anuncios. . . . Y, sin embargo, desventurado, no hay hechura de Dios que no tenga su *para qué* en este taller admirable del trabajo universal; tú has nacido para un gran oficio, en el cual puedes alcanzar mucha gloria y el pan de cada día. Bobalicón, ¿no has caído en ello? . . . ¡Eres tan bruto! . . . ¿Pero di, no te has mirado al espejo alguna vez? ¿No se te ha ocurrido? . . . Pareces lelo . . . Pues te lo diré: para lo que tú sirves es para modelo de pintores . . . ¿no entiendes? Pues ellos te ponen vestido de santo, o de caballero, o de Padre Eterno, y te sacan el retrato . . . porque tienes la gran figura. Cara, cuerpo, expresión, todo lo que no es del alma es en ti noble y hermoso; llevas en tu persona un tesoro, un verdadero tesoro de líneas . . . Vamos, apuesto a que no lo entiendes.»

La vanidad aumentó la turbación en que el bueno de Izquierdo estaba. Presunciones de gloria le pasaron con ráfagas de hoguera por la frente . . . Entrevió un porvenir brillante . . . ¡El retratado por los pintores! . . . ¡Y eso se pagaba! Y se ganaban cuartos por vestirse, ponerse y ¡ah! . . . *Platón* se miró en el vidrio del cuadro de las trenzas; pero no se veía bien. . . . (p. 286)

Guillermina's statement reflects several Platonic ideas, the first being that "no hay hechura de Dios que no tenga su *para qué* en este taller admirable del trabajo universal," a concept central to the *Republic* (II, p. 370). When she goes on to instruct *Platón* in his ideal metier, another Platonic note is struck, this time with a hollow resonance, for it has to do with the relationship between *Platón*'s exterior appearance and his inner qualities. Galdós's character lacks "lo noble y hermoso" of the soul, which for Plato was more significant than exterior beauty (*Republic,* IV, p. 443; IX, pp. 588-89). The fact that the handsome *Platón* looks in the glass and "no se veía bien" may be explained in Platonic terms by the fact that he lacks the inner qualities which Plato believed radiated from the best of people and were reflected back from mirror-like surfaces. It is also significant that Galdós's character will work for a painter. Plato had little regard for (non-Platonic) painters (*Republic,* III, X, passim) and particularly singled out for criticism those who painted only imitations of sensible things. As Frederick Copleston explains, "In the tenth book of the *Republic,* Plato says artists are at the third remove from truth. For example, there is a specific form of man, the ideal type that all individuals of the species strive to realize, and there are particular men who are copies or imperfect realizations of the specific types. The artist now comes and paints a man, the painted man being an imitation of an imitation."[6]

In the case of Galdós's *Platón,* the artist will be painting an imitation of a radically imperfect imitation. In real life there is nothing admirable about him; in no way could he serve as a model to be imitated. Thus the fact that he is frequently referred to only as "el modelo" constitutes an ironic elaboration on the disparity between the character *Platón* and Plato's ideal person.

Nevertheless, *Platón* does follow Guillermina's advice and throughout the rest of the novel he is happy and successful. Galdós, still in Platonic terms, says, "*Platón* descubrió al fin la ley de su sino, aquello para que exclusiva y *solutamente* servía. Y tuvo sosiego y pan, fue útil y desempeñó un gran papel, y hasta se hizo célebre y se lo disputaban y le traían en palmitas. No hay ser humano, por despreciable que parezca, que no pueda ser eminencia en algo, y aquel buscón sin suerte, después de medio siglo de equivocaciones, ha venido a ser, por su hermosísimo talante, el gran *modelo* de la pintura histórica contemporánea" (pp. 267-68). Galdós's intimate friend, Concha-Ruth Morell, perceived that he was doing

something playful with the character *Platón,* but did not understand what it was. In an undated letter on deposit at the Casa-Museo Pérez Galdós, she wrote, "¡Qué sosería, y que . . .! Mira tú, que decir que le decían *Platón* porque comía en un plato muy grande . . . Sólo de un *célebre* [sic] tan *deseaîto* como el tuyo pueden salir *tantísimas y tan grandísimas sandeces.*"[7] She might have added in the same vein that only Galdós could be so daring as to make of a *buscón* an ideal example, a *modelo.*

Having established *Platón* as a point of reference for what he regards as an essentially antirealistic philosophy, Galdós proceeds to develop the unfortunate consequences of Platonism through the lives of other characters. Father Nicolás Rubín (purposefully described by Galdós in the most negative of terms: physically, morally, and intellectually) must, because of his arrogant misappropriation of the concept of spiritual love, bear considerable responsibility for Fortunata's unhappy marriage and ultimate death. Libidinously "frigidísimo" (p. 424) and "glacial," he has no knowledge of "la máquina admirable de las pasiones" and is unable to see "la realidad del alma humana" (p. 425). Thus he is a completely inadequate marriage counselor, who understands the final step of Platonic idealized love but fails to see that it is completely inappropriate in the case of Fortunata. In his premarriage counseling he tells her: "El verdadero amor es el espiritual, y la única manera de amar es enamorarse de la persona por las prendas del alma. . . . Diránle a usted que el amor y la hermosura física son hermanos, y le hablarán a usted de Grecia y del naturalismo pagano. No haga usted caso de patrañas, hija mía, no crea en otro amor que en el espiritual, o sea en las simpatías de alma con alma" (p. 425).

Unlike volume one, where the expression of Platonic concepts was humorous and caused no harm, volume two shows Father Rubín's advocacy as having tragic results. Here one sees the perversion of a Platonic concept, the notion of spiritual love, which has been absorbed into Christianity and misused by the celibate clergy (whom Galdós, the perennial anticleric, abominated) as a strategy for the domination of intimate family life.[8]

Even more unfortunate is the Platonism of Nicolás's brother Maxi, which leads to disastrous results for both himself and Fortunata. Those qualities lacking in *Platón,* which Plato so admired, are present in Maxi and are, in fact, responsible to a degree for his overidealization of Fortunata, which, in turn, is a factor in their entering into an impossible marriage:

> Todo lo que en el alma humana puede existir de *noble* y *hermoso* brotó en la suya, como los chorros de lava en el volcán activo. Soñaba con redenciones y regeneraciones, con lavaduras de manchas y con sacar del pasado negro de su amada una vida de méritos. El generoso galán veía los más sublimes problemas morales en la frente de aquella infeliz mujer, y resolverlos en sentido del bien parecíale la más grande empresa de la voluntad humana. Porque su loco entusiasmo le impulsaba a la salvación social y moral de su ídolo, y a poner en esta obra grandiosa todas las energías que alborotaban su alma. Las peripecias vergonzosas de la vida de ella no le desalentaban, y hasta medía con gozo la hondura del abismo del cual iba a sacar a su amiga, y la había de sacar pura o purificada. (pp. 362-63; italics added)

When Maxi's marriage fails, he is unable to face the reality that Juanito Santa Cruz has impregnated his wife. He prefers to retreat into religious irrationality and aspects of Platonism. It is important to note here that Plato believed madness was a divine gift (*Phaedrus,* p. 244) and that madness caused by love is the greatest of heaven's blessings (*Phaedrus,* p. 245). Thus one is not surprised, as Maxi's illness deepens, to find his activities and statements reflecting Platonism. He tells Fortunata in very Platonic terminology that her pregnancy has been caused by "Pensamiento Puro." Maxi becomes preoccupied with "manías de emanación del alma y de la doctrina que iba a predicar" (p. 759). Like the Greek master, he turns his attention not only to the origin but also the destiny of the human soul. The following sentences, for example, recall Plato's ideas as expressed in *Phaedrus* (pp. 245-49). "¿De dónde emana el alma? ¿Es parte de la sustancia divina, que se encarna con la vida y se desencarna con la muerte para volver a su origen?" (p. 756). As Maxi's mental health worsens he considers suicide. Among the poisons he contemplates is hemlock: "La *cicutina* tiene una ventaja, y es que con ella se liberó el señor de Sócrates, lo que la hace venerable" (p. 767). Plato devoted two of his dialogues

to the death of Socrates, one of which focuses prominently on Socrates's thoughts in prison prior to his death. Galdós not only has Maxi express Socrates's final ideas but also gives prominence to the words "calabozo" (p. 766) and "carcelero" (pp. 766, 767, 768). Like Socrates in prison, Maxi looks upon death as a liberation, and repeatedly says that it is necessary to kill the "bestia," the nondivine part of human essence which Plato also characterized as animalistic (*Republic,* IX, p. 829; *Phaedrus,* p. 254).

Maxi, however, does not commit suicide because Fortunata leaves him. With the cause of his illness thus removed, he experiences a remission of symptoms. Concurrent with this change in his health, Maxi passes (in the chapter entitled "La razón de la sinrazón") from Platonism to Aristotelianism, a school of thought developed by Plato's most distinguished pupil. Like Aristotle,[9] Maxi gives emphasis to logic. "[El] trabajaba en la razón, entreteniéndose con ejercicios de lógica, sentando principios y obteniendo consecuencias con admirable facilidad. En fin, que en la marcha que llevaba el proceso cerebral le sobrevino el *furor de la lógica* y se dice esto así, porque cuando pensaba algo, ponía un verdadero empeño maniático en que fuera pensando en los términos usuales de la más rigurosa dialéctica. Rechazaba de su mente con tenaz repugnancia todo lo que no fuera obra de la razón y del cálculo, no desmintiendo esto ni en las cosas más insignificantes" (p. 844).

Maxi gains considerable attention and admiration through his astounding feats of logic. Most importantly, without asking a single question of anyone, he is able to discover Fortunata's hiding place by an amazing series of logical deductions. His triumph is only temporary. In the next chapter all Maxi's rationality and logic come tumbling down when Fortunata drives him back into the world of mental illness and into catatonic incapacity by promising him love, if he will but kill Juanito Santa Cruz and Aurora Samaniego.

After Fortunata's death Maxi's health improves, but he still cannot face reality. Once again he can relate to her only in a Platonic, idealized manner. He says:

> adoro en ella lo ideal, lo eterno . . . como yo la soñaba y la veía en mi alma; la veo adornada de los atributos más hermosos de la divinidad, reflejándose en ella como en un espejo; la adoro, porque no tendríamos medio de sentir el amor de Dios, si Dios no nos lo diera a conocer figurando que sus atributos se transmiten a un ser de nuestra raza. Ahora que no vive, la contemplo libre de las transformaciones que el mundo y el contacto del mal le imprimían; ahora no temo la infidelidad, que es un razonamiento con las fuerzas de la Naturaleza que pasan junto a nosotros; ahora no temo las traiciones, que son proyección de sombra por cuerpos opacos que se acercan; ahora todo es libertad, luz; desaparecieron las asquerosidades de la realidad, y vivo con mi ídolo en mi idea, y nos adoramos con pureza y santidad sublimes en el tálamo incorruptible de mi pensamiento. (p. 937)

Maxi himself, in spite of his great emotional-mental turmoils, has at last arrived at the ultimate step in Plato's metaphysical scale: "Yo me liberté, y vivo en la pura idea" (p. 937). He has left the cares of the world and the body so far behind that he dwells in the realm where, according to Plato, the soul emanates and then returns after being freed upon the death of the body (*Timaeus,* p. 42)—"en las estrellas" (p. 938).

For a person who demonstrates the tragedy of idealism gone astray, confinement to a mental hospital is the only solution, and it is on this note that Galdós closes his great four-volume novel.

In reflecting on Galdós's reasons for mounting so severe an attack on Platonic idealism, one may note that Galdós, in describing Spanish life for readers of *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires, had written in 1885, "Nos hallamos, por desgracia, en la peor de las situaciones, pues si por un lado la fe se nos va, no aparece la filosofía que nos ha de dar algo con que sustituir aquella eficaz energía. Faltan en la sociedad principios de unidad y generalización. Todo está en el aire. . . ." In the absence of such unifying principles, and with no commonly accepted understanding of social goods and social goals, "en esto de la filosofía hay modas casi tan repentinas y fugaces como las de los sombreros de señora."[10] The writings of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel (the German Idealists) had created "a renewal of Platonism,"[11] which in turn had generated considerable anti-Platonic reaction, and this controversy had spilled over into aesthetics, for the purpose of art is, of course, well defined in Platonic doctrine and had, by the 1870s, resulted in an aesthetic Idealist movement of great vitality. Thus Galdós, in *Fortunata y Jacinta*

(written the year after the *La Prensa* remarks), both defends an implicitly aesthetic idea and, in accord with that aesthetic, seeks to convey in his novel the vacuum of belief through which Spain was then passing. We have shown how, on the one level, he depicts the deleterious effects on human lives of an abstract idealism; let us look now at the second level of the "curso," the means by which he renders the anarchic world of ideas of his time. In the course of this "curso," he will examine both the ancient, original philosophical movements which contended with Platonism and the nineteenth-century adaptations thereof.

In the opening chapter of volume three, Galdós focuses upon the *costumbrismo* of Madrid café life. Concerning the popular nightly *tertulias,* Galdós says, "En un café se oyen las cosas más necias y también las más sublimes. Hay quien ha aprendido todo lo que sabe de filosofía en la mesa de un café, de lo que se deduce que hay quien en la misma mesa pone cátedra amena de los sistemas filosóficos" (p. 552).

Galdós's main *tertuliano,* Juan Pablo Rubín, decides to become something of a philosopher. Galdós explains the process and the unusual reason behind the decision. "Un día se despertó pensando que debía *empollar* algo de sistemas filosóficos y de historia de las religiones. El móvil de esto no era simplemente el amor al saber, sino un maligno deseo de tener argumentos con qué apabullar a los curas de la mesa próxima, que sólo por ser curas, aunque sueltos, le eran antipáticos, pues odiaba a la clase entera desde aquella trastada que los sotanas le hicieron en el Norte" (p. 557).[12]

Juan Pablo holds his own in disputes against the clerics until one night he casts a slur upon the reputation of the Virgin Mary. Such a fight ensues that Juan Pablo is forever barred from the café. Moving to a second café (el Siglo), Juan Pablo finds already established there a group of "filósofos de café" (p. 560). However they are really spiritualists and he does not spend many nights with them. "Entendía Juan Pablo que esto de ir corriéndola de mundo en mundo después que uno se muere es muy aceptable; pero lo del *periespíritu* no lo tragaba, ni la guasa de que vengan Sócrates y Cervantes a ponerse de cháchara con nosotros cuando nos place. Vamos, esto es para bobos" (p. 560).

In a third café Juan Pablo finds a group of uneducated people whom he can dominate. His main thesis, which continues to reflect anticlericalism with "fuerza dialéctica y entusiasmo" (p. 565), is that "no hay Infierno ni Cielo, ni tampoco alma . . ., ni nada más que la Naturaleza que nos rodea, inmensa, eterna, animada por la fuerza." Others agree that *fuerza* is the key concept; one lady replies: "Llámelo usted *hache* . . . la fuerza, el alma . . ., la . . . como quien dice, la idea." To which Juan Pablo replies, "con desesperación de maestro, Doña Nieves, por amor de Dios. . . . Que se me está usted volviendo muy *hegeliana*" (p. 566).[13]

Later, Maxi Rubín, when he is identifying ideationally with Plato and Socrates, defines the opposing philosophical school of his brother Juan Pablo as one of *"fuerza y materia"* (p. 757). This was the doctrine of the Atomists (the best known of whom were Leucippus and Democritus) which existed prior to and concurrent with Platonism in ancient Greece.[14] However, *Fuerza y materia* is also the title of a book by the naturalist and philosopher Ludwig Buechner, which became very popular throughout Europe after its publication in 1855. It is quite appropriate for the idealistic, Plato-oriented Maxi to react, define, and denigrate his brother's philosophical doctrine—because the Idealists were vigorously attacked by the materialistic Buechner.[15]

Very importantly, Juan Pablo's doctrine is beyond the comprehension of the *tertulianos,* as Galdós illustrates with delightful humor in the following interchange between Juan Pablo and some women at his table. The point in question is a definition of the key term, nature:

> —La Naturaleza somos nosotros los pecadores, todos frágiles. ¿Verdad, don Juan Pablo?
> —Los pecados son Naturaleza—apuntó otra—; por eso a los hijos de pecado les llaman *naturales* . . ., claro.
> —¡Vaya un lío que me arman ustedes!
> Una de las placeras que presentes estaban tenía muy abultado el seno. En cierta ocasión, estando confesándose, le dijo el cura: «Sea usted modesta en el vestir y no haga ostentación de esas *naturalezas* . . .» —«¿Qué, señor?»—«Eso, la delantera.» Por esto, al oír hablar de Naturaleza y de pecado, creyó que se referían a aquellas partes que debe cubrir el recato, y dijo escandalizada:
> —¡Vaya unas conversaciones indecentes que sacan ustedes! (p. 567)

Just as Atomism failed to compete with Platonism in ancient Greece, so the doctrine of "fuerza y materia" (as becomes apparent in later chapters of Galdós's novel) also fails to compete with Platonism as a continuing theme in *Fortunata y Jacinta*. After showing also that Juan Pablo's doctrine offers no consolation[16] and that current events interest the *tertulianos* more, Galdós says, "No siguieron estas conversaciones filosóficas" (p. 567).

Philosophy again becomes important in chapter four of volume three when Evaristo Feijoo becomes Fortunata's protector. In contrast to the anti-Platonic philosophy of Juan Pablo Rubín (with his *fuerza y materia*), Galdós presents by means of Feijoo a practical school of philosophy that was also competitive with Platonism in ancient Greece. Feijoo is Galdós's incarnation of modern-day pragmatic Sophism (although not so labeled by Galdós).[17] The chapter in which Feijoo is Fortunata's protector and teacher is significantly entitled "Un curso de filosofía práctica."

The term "curso" is significant, as is Galdós's subsequent use of the words "lecciones" and "enseñar" (p. 601), because, in Plato's time the Sophists were the principal teachers of the young. In contrast to Socrates and Plato, who were interested in great universal truths, the Sophists emphasized a relativistic, practical adaptation to life.[18] Like the Sophist, Protagoras, in Plato's dialogue of the same name, Feijoo is a much older man—in fact, the oldest of Galdós's principal characters. He begins his "lecciones" by telling Fortunata that she must be practical in all things. However his instructions regarding love, sex, and society come to be the most prominent in the chapter. Feijoo (much as did Galdós himself), believes that "el casarse es estúpido, y me iré para el otro barrio sin apearme de esto. ¡Qué quieres! Yo he visto mucho mundo. . . . A mí no me la da nadie. Sé que es condición precisa del amor la no duración, y que de todos los que se comprometen a adorarse mientras vivan, el noventa por ciento, créetelo, a los dos años se consideran prisioneros el uno del otro, y darían algo por soltar el grillete. Lo que llaman infidelidad no es más que el fuero de la Naturaleza, que quiere imponerse contra el despotismo social" (p. 617). Feijoo says further:

> El amor es la reclamación de la especie que quiere perpetuarse, y al estímulo de esta necesidad tan conservadora como el comer, los sexos se buscan y las uniones se verifican por elección fatal, superior y extraña a todos los artificios de la sociedad. Mirarse un hombre y una mujer. ¿Qué es? La exigencia de la especie que pide un nuevo ser, y este nuevo ser reclama de sus probables padres que le den vida. Todo lo demás es música, fatuidad y palabrería de los que han querido hacer una Sociedad en sus gabinetes, fuera de las bases immortales de la naturaleza. ¡Si esto es claro como el agua! Por eso me río yo de ciertas leyes y de todo el código penal social del amor, que es un fárrago de tonterías inventadas. (p. 617)

In spite of his radical views concerning marriage, Feijoo gives Fortunata the following practical advice: "Y en un caso extremo, quiero decir, si te ves en el disparadero de faltar, guardas el decoro, y habrás hecho el menor mal posible. . . . El decoro, la corrección, la decencia, este es el secreto, compañera" (p. 638). And the "filósofo práctico" (p. 641) concludes his advice by telling Fortunata that it is necessary to "salvar la forma" (p. 639). Here he is using one of the most important words of Plato's entire philosophy (and which Galdós had used earlier in an important way in the penultimate chapter of *Marianela* [1878])[19] in a completely distorted manner. First, however, Galdós sets a humorous tone:

> Detúvose [Feijoo] asustado, a la manera del ladrón que siente ruido, y se volvió a poner la mano sobre la cabeza, como invocando sus canas. Pero sus canas no le dijeron nada. Al punto se envalentonó, y recobró la seguridad de su lenguaje, diciendo: «Tú eres demasiado inexperta para conocer la importancia que tiene en el mundo la forma. ¿Sabes tú lo que es la forma, o mejor dicho, las formas? Pues no te diré que éstas sean todo, pero hay casos en que son casi todo. Con ellas marcha la sociedad, no te diré que a pedir de boca, pero sí de la mejor manera que puede marchar. ¡Oh! Los principios son una cosa muy bonita; pero las formas no lo son menos. Entre una sociedad sin principios y una sociedad sin formas, no sé yo con cuál me quedaría.» (p. 638)

Of course, Feijoo is as inexperienced as Fortunata regarding the true meaning of the concept *forma*—that is, in the Platonic sense. Plato's forms are ideal entities and any spatial-temporal object is merely a shadow of a form.[20] However it is not inappropriate, and in fact it is very clever, for an incarnation of a rival philosophical school to appropriate a key term from Platonism and invert its meaning in order to propagate his own views. Galdós here demonstrates both his own thorough

knowledge of philosophy and his skill as a creative artist by once again developing a character who gives no hint whatsoever of having read ancient Greek philosophy, but very articulately presents the views of one of its major schools (Sophism), especially vis-à-vis its main competitor (Platonism).

It is helpful at this point in the story for Fortunata to experience the lessons of an older, practical person. She does become a changed, more mature person and is better able to cope with the vicissitudes in store for her during the rest of the novel. Feijoo as a modern-day Sophist offers a humorous bonus and may be considered a step in the "[presentación] amena de los sistemas filosóficos" which Galdós had hinted at earlier in volume three (p. 552).

We have already mentioned that Maxi Rubín passes from Platonic idealism to a period of emphasis on logical deduction. Here (as noted) one is inclined to think of Aristotle (Plato's pupil), who is often called "the Father of Logic." Aristotelianism constituted the third and last school of thought which competed with Platonism.[21] It is significant that Galdós chooses to make Aristotelianism the last of the philosophical schools found in his novel since this is what occurred in ancient Greece. It also concludes Galdós's own "[presentación] amena de los sistemas filosóficos" (p. 552).

We have seen that Juan Pablo's doctrine of *fuerza y materia* (ancient Atomism and modern Buechnerism) had no real appeal and passed readily from the scene. While Maxi's conversion to Aristotelean-like logical analysis provided an opportunity for a display of intellectual brillance, it all came tumbling down when Maxi had to face an important real-life problem. Thus of the four ancient Greek philosophies (which still formed the basis of philosophical thought in Galdós's time), our author indicates that only practical Sophism and Platonism have any real appeal for the modern man or woman.[22] We have also seen that Feijoo's "curso de filosofía práctica" did help Fortunata to become a stronger, happier person and to cope better with life's situations. It turned out that only Platonism had a tragic influence on the lives of Galdós's protagonists. Although he knew well the main concepts of Platonic thought, and repeatedly used them in his novels, Galdós saw clearly their particular danger for modern men and women: they kept people from facing reality.

As noted above, the vigorous renewal of Platonism in the latter half of the nineteenth century had also created problems for Galdós and other writers of the realistic school. Idealism (with a large component of Platonism) passed directly from the realm of philosophy to that of artistic creation. In the mid-1870's in polemical articles and in the Ateneo debates concerning idealism versus realism, the champions of idealism invoked the teachings of the German philosophers Krause,[23] Hegel, and Schelling, and the German-inspired French philosopher, Victor Cousin. Concerning the latter, George Boas has said, "Art, he believed, is neither an imitation of nature (sensationalism) nor edification (moralism), but rather a vision of 'the infinite.' Though all arts utilize matter, they communicate to it 'a mysterious character which speaks to the imagination and to the soul, liberates them from the real, and bears them aloft either gently or violently to unknown regions.'"[24]

Such ideas were the exact opposite of what Galdós was trying to accomplish with his own novelistic endeavors. Moreover the idealists were quite aggressive in carrying the fight to the realists (both in the 1870's and then again, after the advent of naturalism, in the 1880's).[25] And we may be sure that Galdós was aware of this polemic, for within *Fortunata y Jacinta* itself he reports that in April 1876 two of his characters (one a literary critic) are having long discussions "sobre el arte realista y el ideal, y la emoción estética" (p. 871).

In all probability Galdós personally attended the Ateneo debates concerning realism and idealism and certainly he soon became a committed champion of the realist aesthetic in its counterattack against the idealistic writers. (It has been shown that he answered *Pepita Jiménez* [1874], which has a lot of Renaissance-derived Neoplatonism, with the socially realistic *Doña Perfecta* [1876].[26] Moreover, in *Marianela* [1878], Galdós demonstrated that it is imperative to pass beyond the metaphysical state [including Platonism] to a positivistic, realistic approach to life.[27]

And, as is well known, this was a campaign that Galdós continued to champion throughout his long career by means of many characters in numerous novels.)

In 1886-87, when writing about the 1870's—which was a time of considerable philosophical and aesthetic ferment—Galdós, the dedicated realist, included much of this in *Fortunata y Jacinta.* Because he was personally affected by this activity, and felt so strongly about it, it is understandable that he has left the reader a record of his opinions. Previous studies, colored by the excitement of discovery, tend to leave the reader with the impression that because Galdós knew Platonism so well and used it extensively he must have been favorably disposed to it.[28] Our study, however, shows that, at least at the time he was writing *Fortunata y Jacinta,* Galdós (now firmly committed to the realist-naturalist aesthetic) held the opposite opinion. Not only did he make fun of the many contending philosophical trends (which changed as quickly as the style of ladies' hats), but he also gave an extra and particular attention to Platonism, creating a denigrating caricature of its founder and then demonstrating, in the fate of two of his most important characters, the detrimental potential of Plato's concepts.

NOTES

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[1]Benito Pérez Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta,* ed. Pedro Ortiz Armengol (Madrid: Hernando, 1979), p. 184. All subsequent references are to this edition and will be noted in the text.

[2]*Benito Pérez Galdós* (Boston: Twayne, 1975), p. 92.

[3]Galdós never allows the reader to identify with *Platón.* Even in the last chapter of the novel, he is still distancing the reader from his character: "Oía Fortunata los ronquidos del venerable *Platón* cual monólogo de un cerdo" (p. 876).

[4]The "Republic," *Dialogues of Plato,* trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), II, 370. All subsequent references (from Plato's writings) are to this edition (volumes one and two) and will be noted in the text (following the norm in Platonic scholarship of citing the original pagination, noted in the book's margins, rather than the page numbers of this particular edition).

[5]Charles H. Pattison, *Plato's The Republic* (Lincoln: Cliff's Notes, 1963), p. 25. Plato, however, does not exclude the possibility of upward social mobility, if one acquires the requisite skills for changing to another occupation.

[6]*A History of Philosophy* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962), I (Part 1), 178.

[7]Gilbert Smith, "Galdós's *Tristana* and Letters from Concha-Ruth Morell," *Anales Galdosianos,* X, (1975), 99.

[8]Nicolás Rubín is also motivated by personal ambition, vanity, and a desire for praise by other clerics (pp. 396-97).

[9]See, among others, "Logic" and "Aristotle," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), IV, 512-17, and I, 151-56.

[10]William H. Shoemaker, *Las cartas desconocidas de Galdós en "La Prensa" de Buenos Aires* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1973), p. 152.

[11]Walter Brugger and Kenneth Baker, eds., "German Idealism," *Philosophical Dictionary* (Spokane: Gonzaga Univ. Press, 1972), p. 152.

[12]Juan Pablo had lost his employment in the Carlist movement, he believed, because of clerical influence.

[13]For Hegelian influence on Fortunata's psychological and spiritual development, see Sherman Eoff, *The Modern Spanish Novel* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1961), p. 139.

[14]For details concerning the Atomists, see Fredrick Copelston, *A History of Philosophy* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962), I, 89-92.

[15]For details, see "Buechner," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), I, 411-13.

[16]Juan Pablo defends his doctrine against all comers, until he is effectively silenced by the café's blind piano player. With great sadness, the blind man insistently asks if it is really true that there is no life after death. Deeply moved by the poor man's miserable physical and emotional state, Juan Pablo replies: "Le diré a usted . . .; si no fuera por estas bromas, ¿cómo se pasaba el rato?" (p. 567). After this encounter Juan Pablo speaks no more about his philosophical doctrine.

[17]This probably comes from Galdós's awareness that Sophism had a perjorative meaning in everyday usage, as it does today: "Razón o argumento aparente con que se quiere defender o persuadir lo que es falso" (Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española* [Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1970], 19th ed., p. 1213). As early as *Doña Perfecta* (1876), Galdós had Pepe Rey criticize "la superstición, el sofisma y las mil mentiras del pasado." *Obras* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1960), IV, 422. In *Fortunata y Jacinta* itself, Galdós has Maxi say to Platón, "Verás cómo destruyo tus sofismas y mentiras" (p. 848).

[18]The Platonists, of course, were interested in the logic of truth, while the Sophists were interested in the logic of persuasion. While other philosophers "were in the main disinterested seekers after truth, . . . the Sophists . . . were not primarily intent on objective truth; their end was practical and not speculative. And so Sophists became instruments of instruction and training in the Greek cities, aiming at teaching the art and control of life" (Copelston, *A History of Philosophy,* I (Part 1), 103-06).

[19]*Obras completas* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1960), 4th ed., IV, 748.

[20]Plato regarded form as the transcendent idea or universal essence; Feijoo, of course, means only external, formal appearance. For a thorough explanation of Plato's doctrine of forms, see Copelston, I (Part 1), 188-231.

[21]For details, see Copelston, I (Part 2), 9-120.

[22]Galdós's earlier sympathy for *Krausismo* (so noticeable in such works as *Doña Perfecta* and *La familia de León Roch*) had cooled by 1885. In his column for *La Prensa,* he listed it among the failed philosophies of the nineteenth century: "Cuando Sanz del Río importó de Alemania la filosofía *Krausista* se formó un plantel de jóvenes de mérito, que hicieron iglesia, núcleo, familia. Pero el *Krausismo* se desacreditó pronto, no sé si por las exageraciones de sus sectarios o por falta de solidez de sus ideas" (Shoemaker, *Las cartas,* p. 152).

[23]See note 22.

[24]"Cousin, Victor," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), I, 247.

[25]For details, see Gifford Davis, "The Spanish Debate over Idealism and Realism before the Impact of Zola's Naturalism," *Publications of the Modern Language Society of America,* 84 (1969), 1649-56.

[26]Vernon A. Chamberlin, "*Doña Perfecta:* Galdós's Reply to *Pepita Jiménez,*" *Anales Galdosianos,* 15 (1980), 11-21.

[27]See, among others, Joaquín Casalduero, *Vida y obra de Galdós* (Madrid: Gredos, 1961), p. 212; Walter T. Pattison, *Benito Pérez Galdós and the Creative Process* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1954), pp. 118-20; and Brian Dendle, "Galdós, Ayguals de Izco, and the Hellenic Inspiration of 'Marianela,'" *Galdós Studies,* II (London: Tamesis, 1974), 1-11.

[28]First Mario E. Ruiz published "El idealismo platónico en 'Marianela' de Galdós," (*Hispania,* 53 [1970], 870-80), which was, in some respects, rebutted, modified, and expanded by Brian Dendle in "Galdós, Ayguals de Izco," pp. 1-11. Then Gustavo Correa published his panoramic study, "Galdós y el platonismo" *Anales Galdosianos,* VII (1972), 3-17, which mentions *Fortunata y Jacinta* in passing (one paragraph on Maxi Rubín). Most recently, James H. Hoddie has demonstrated Platonism in *La desheredada*: "The Genesis of *La desheredada*: Beethoven, the Picaresque and Plato," *Anales Galdosianos,* XIV (1979), 27-50.